



# HealthySEAT

Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool



Information for NH School Officials

February 2006

## New Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool and Training Now Available for School District Facility Managers

The N.H. Department of Environmental Services is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help New Hampshire school district facility managers implement the new EPA *Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool* (Healthy SEAT) for school buildings in their districts. This Healthy SEAT tool is a software package designed to help school districts identify, prioritize and manage their environmental responsibilities. It lets school district staff track environmental health and safety conditions by school, and generate customized checklists and reports. DES is customizing this software specifically for use in New Hampshire and will offer training sessions across the state during the coming year.

The project is a partnership of DES, the N.H. Department of Health and Human Services, the N.H. Department of Education, health departments in both Manchester and Nashua, and the N.H. Partnership for High Performance Schools.

For more information on this project and the Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool in general, contact Rick Rumba, Environmental Health Program Administrator at (603) 271-1987 or [rrumba@des.state.nh.us](mailto:rrumba@des.state.nh.us).

### Improve the Health, Safety, and Performance of Students and Staff

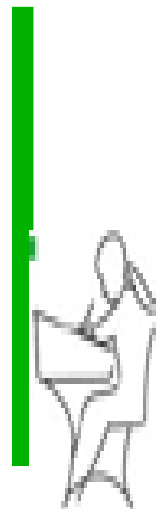
Many schools contain hazards that may pose risks to children and staff. The guidance included in HealthySEAT can improve the health of students and staff by ensuring that all potential environmental and safety hazards in schools are being properly managed.

*New Hampshire has almost 500 public school buildings serving over 200,000 children. Facility managers responsible for these buildings are often faced with numerous preventable health and safety issues. This no-cost comprehensive self-assessment tool will be a valuable asset for assisting facility managers in assuring that all students and staff have a safe, healthy and productive learning environment.*



Examples of school environmental hazards include:

- Chemical releases
- Pesticide exposures
- Flaking lead paint
- Mold
- indoor air quality problems
- Damaged asbestos-containing building materials.
- Radon
- School bus idling
- Lead in water



## What does HealthySEAT include?

- Computer-based HealthySEAT tool customized for N.H.
- User's Manual with step-by-step instructions for further customizing and using HealthySEAT
- Tracking software to help districts manage all aspects of a district-wide assessment program. The status of facility conditions and corrective actions can be tracked school-by-school, and reports can be created for district use.
- Customized inspection checklists where you select specific hazards to track
- Customized Guidebook for use by the assessor and school district staff that provides additional guidance on each of the hazards the district has selected.

All aspects of the tool can easily be customized by school districts to reflect the programs and requirements specifically applicable to their schools. Districts choose which hazards to integrate into their own assessment programs and can modify all of the content as they see fit. The tool is designed so that districts can assess and track an unlimited number of facility conditions, including non-environmental issues from bathroom cleanliness to emergency response plans, if they so choose.

**DES recommends that an assessment be conducted at least annually.**



**HealthySEAT** is free to school districts and meant to be loaded and used on district computers. DES is customizing the tool specifically for use in NH and will provide a CD for you to use as you see fit. There are no reporting requirements and **no obligations** to use the checklist provided.

The tracking software is compatible with Microsoft Access and is self-contained, so districts will not need to purchase new software. The installation can occur on any Windows-based computer, on network servers for multiple users at multiple locations, and controlled access is provided for security purposes. HealthySEAT is intended primarily as a tool for school districts to use to periodically evaluate their school facilities at a macro level to be sure that all of the essential elements of key programs are being properly managed school-by-school. Districts choose the frequency with which they conduct assessments and may conduct the assessments using district staff, school-based staff, contractors, or a combination, depending on their particular circumstances and available resources.

HealthySEAT is designed to manage information on multiple buildings. It is not a substitute for day-to-day vigilance and good practice to effectively manage environmental, health, and safety issues to protect children, staff and the environment.

### Healthy School Environment Web Resources

Listed below are on-line resources to help facility managers, school administrators, architects, design engineers, school nurses, parents, teachers and staff address environmental health issues in schools. Visitors can browse resources by topic or by geographic area, or search all resources by entering specific keywords into the search box at the top of each page at [www.epa.gov/schools/](http://www.epa.gov/schools/) (or) [cfpub.epa.gov/schools/index.cfm](http://cfpub.epa.gov/schools/index.cfm)

**Frequently Asked Questions?** [www.epa.gov/schools/healthyseat/frequentquestions.htm](http://www.epa.gov/schools/healthyseat/frequentquestions.htm)

**Coming Soon!**

**NH's customized HealthySEAT tool on CD, and on-line!**

**NH DES Environmental Health Program website:** [des.nh.gov/ARD/EHP/index.html](http://des.nh.gov/ARD/EHP/index.html)

**NH's HealthySEAT Contact:** Rick Rumba, DES Environmental Health Program, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301 (603) 271-1987 or e-mail [rrumba@des.state.nh.us](mailto:rrumba@des.state.nh.us)